

**Southern Ohio Synod – ELCA**  
**Synod Council Meeting**  
**All Saints Lutheran Church**  
**6770 North High Street, Worthington, Ohio 43085**  
**September 7, 2019**

Call to Order:

Vice President Ellis called the Synod Council meeting to order a 10:18 AM. Ms. Ellis then opened the meeting with prayer.

Review and Approval of Agenda of the 09/07/2019 Meeting:

The Agenda for the day was reviewed.

**VOTED:**

**SC.19.09.01                    To approve the 09/07/2019 Agenda. (Drumm/Schmidt) APPROVED.**

Vice President Ellis opened with devotions by explaining we will break into four small groups for discussion. The question to discuss is: what we would like to achieve on Council this year? The members then shared results from the group discussions. Some ideas included aspiration that the Thrive! campaign prosper; fortifying bridges between the Synod and congregations; expanding men's ministries within the Synod.

Ms. Ellis introduced guest Pastor Johnathan Bull, Synod Finance Committee, who attended the meeting. She congratulated Bishop Darcy Dillahunt on her re-election on the first ballot.

Review and Approval of Minutes of the 04/27/2019 Meeting:

The Minutes of the 04/27/2019 meeting were reviewed.

**VOTED:**

**SC.19.09.02                    To approve the Minutes of the 04/27/2019 meeting. (Goff/Wolfe) APPROVED (Abstaining: Combs, Byrd, Fischer, Schmidt, Siegenthaler, Walker, Witt, Wyckoff).**

Roll Call:

Members present:        Rev. Matthew Byrd, Rev. Mark Combs, Bp. Suzanne D. Dillahunt, Mr. David Drumm, Ms. Marjorie Ellis, Ms. Holly Fischer, Mr. Richard Freudenberger, Mr. Steve Goff, Ms. Jeni Gray, Rev. Stephen Kimm, Rev. Laura Leach-Shreffler, Mr. Kevin Pyle, Ms. Laura Schmidt, Rev. Cheryl Siegenthaler, Ms. Kathie Skamfer, Ms. Morgan Walker, Mr. Doug Ware, Rev. Dr. Kenneth R. Witt, Rev. Ralph Wolfe, Ms. Susan Wyckoff.

Members excused:        Mr. Roy E. Hart, Ms. Michelle Riesbeck, Mr. Steven Schnittke, Ms. Cindy Schrader.

Members absent: Ms. Carol Swank.

Reports of the Officers and Executive Committee:

Vice President

1. Vice President Ellis provided congregational Mission Support and ministry giving reports.
2. Ms. Ellis reported on the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, noting the re-election of Bishop Eaton on the first ballot by 81% of the vote.
3. Ms. Ellis reported on the African Descent Lutheran Association meeting, highlighting a parenting program and the positive impact of early childhood intervention.
4. Ms. Ellis reviewed the Bishop's letter to the Synod (8/12/2019). This provides a great explanation of the "sanctuary denomination" and what this means.

Secretary

1. Secretary Fischer reported that on August 30, 2019, the ELCA Secretary certified required amendments to the Constitution for Synods, and certified non-required amendments, all as adopted by the 2019 Churchwide Assembly. Ms. Fischer will revise the SOS Constitution to conform to the required amendments and submit the revised document to the ELCA Secretary. The non-required amendments may be considered and adopted at Synod Assembly by a majority vote of the members present and voting.
2. Pr. Kimm discussed concern regarding the frequency of governing documents amendments being a burden on congregations. Discussion ensued. Pr. Abrams recommended congregations start with adoption of the current Model Constitution and work from that, modifying with language unique to the congregation. The Synod has a Committee in place to assist congregations in implementing changes.
3. Ms. Fischer reported on the July and September 2019 actions of the Executive Committee. She noted that at the recommendation of the Finance Committee, the Committee recommended that the Synod checking account be changed to First Commonwealth Bank; and disbursement of a \$190,787.00 gift from North Community Lutheran Church be allotted \$20,000.00 to the Synod Thrive! Campaign and \$170,787.00 to the Living Christ Fund.

Treasurer

1. Treasurer Pyle presented the April 2019 to August 2019 Financial Reports. He reviewed the General Fund Budget Comparison. Mr. Pyle discussed the difference between net assets/with donor restrictions versus net assets designated by Council. The former cannot be changed absent a letter from the donor; if the donor is deceased, in order to redistribute donor

restricted assets, it would be necessary to apply to probate court. This would require legal fees for representation and court filing fees, which may not be feasible depending on the asset amount. At the same time, some assets are currently not useable for the purposes intended by the donor. In contrast, assets designated by Council can be shifted by Council in its discretion. Discussed ensued. Pr. Kimm asked whether it would be worthwhile to explore seeking redistribution of any of the current donor restricted assets.

**VOTED**  
**SC 19.09.03**

**For the Finance Committee to explore the feasibility of pursuing probate court action with respect to certain donor restricted assets that are no longer capable of their intended use. (Kimm/ Schmidt). APPROVED.**

Treasurer,  
continued

2. Pr. Bull explained the Finance Committee's recommendation regarding the disbursement of a \$190,787.00 gift from North Community Lutheran Church to allot \$20,000.00 to the Synod Thrive! Campaign and \$170,787.00 to the Living Christ Fund.

**VOTED:**  
**SC 19.09.04**

**To allocate \$20,000.00 of the \$190,787.00 gift from North Community Lutheran Church to the Synod Thrive! Campaign and \$170,787.00 to the Living Christ Fund, as recommended by the Finance and Executive Committees. (Finance Committee/Pyle) APPROVED.**

Treasurer,  
continued

3. Pr. Bull reported that over the past several months the Finance Committee has evaluated and identified issues with Fifth Third, the Synod's banking service, and recommended to the Executive Committee that the Synod move from Fifth Third to First Commonwealth Bank. The level of personalized customer service and responsiveness is superior with First Commonwealth. A lock box change will occur at the beginning of the fiscal year (February 1, 2020). In addition, an equity account for receipt of stock gifts will be established. Synod staff is working on updating forms and a roll out communication strategy.

Vice President Ellis then declared a recess at 11:38 am.

Vice President Ellis reconvened the meeting at 11:45 am.

Bishop

Bishop Dillahunt noted that her written report was distributed to the members of the Synod Council. The Bishop's Report is attached to these minutes for review. The following are highlights:

1. The Bishop welcomed new Council members and asked all members to to introduce themselves. She expressed thanks to all. She introduced the Executive Committee members.

2. Bishop Dillahunt reported on the 2019 Churchwide Assembly, which occurred from August 5-10 at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She noted the overall environment was extremely positive and faithful. Approximately two-thirds of the assembly representatives were new attendees. Ms. Leach-Shreffler recommended others attend if possible and shared how moving and encouraging the experience was. Mr. Ware similarly conveyed how inspirational it was to worship with such a large group gathered for one purpose.

3. The Bishop reported that the next Churchwide Assembly will be hosted in Columbus, Ohio.

4. Bishop Dillahunt reported that mission support is up this year. The Bishop asked Pr. Kerrigan to discuss plans for the fall. Pr. Kerrigan reported that mission support is managed by the Synod Stewardship Team, and the Team is seeking the perspective of smaller congregations. The Team will encourage congregations to promote conversations among members, leading to faithful decisions, rather than mission support decisions being pastor or council-driven.

5. Reverend Dr. Lynn Nakamura was introduced by Bishop Dillahunt. Rev. Dr. Nakamura reviewed the Candidacy Application Process Guide/Theological Education for Emerging Ministries (TEEM) Applicants. Dr. Nakamura explained that TEEM is really a sub-category of the Word and Sacrament roster. The new process is focused on Word and Sacrament, with TEEM as a program under this. Thus, an individual would go through the candidacy process like any other traditional candidate but would preference the TEEM program.

Prayer was then offered by Bishop prior to the lunch recess.

Vice President Ellis declared a recess for lunch at 12:14 PM.

Vice President Ellis then reconvened the meeting at 12:50 PM.

Bishop,  
continued

6. The Bishop noted installations will occur today for staff and officers who were not present at the 2019 Churchwide Assembly.

7. The Bishop noted that President Hall will complete her term as President of Capitol University in June 2020.

8. From November 6-11, Bishop Dillahunt and Pr. Abrams will be travelling to Guatemala for the ELCA South American Consultation. The travel will be funded by a congregation rather than by Mission support.

9. The Bishop requested prayers for victims of the recent hurricane, and for the Conference of Bishops.

10. Future meetings for Synod Council will commence at 10:00 am.

11. Susan Barton-Nonno reported that on May 16, 2020, Epiphany Lutheran church in Centerville Ohio will host a one-day Synod Assembly. Costs will be reduced as Epiphany is absorbing costs in hosting. Ms. Skamfer expressed thanks for the excellent communications related to the Synod Assembly this year.

12. The Bishop reported on the Thrive! campaign. To date, approximately \$187,000.00 has been received toward a \$2 million goal.

13. The Bishop noted the position of Treasurer is now by appointment rather than election at the Synod Assembly. Kevin Pyle has agreed to serve a second term appointment and will be installed today.

14. Pr. Abrams discussed the 17% vacancy rate for Southern Ohio Synod congregation pastors. This is lower than many other Synods. Across the ELCA, the availability of pastors is lower today than historically. The Bishop noted that over one year ago, when Pr. Abrams assumed responsibility for pastor placement, the Synod vacancy rate was 38%; his work has resulted in the lower vacancy rate today.

15. The Bishop concluded by sharing expectations. She asked members of Council to pray for one another in their work, and to seek prayerful guidance for God's direction in this work.

16. Pr. Siegenthaler expressed her appreciation for the notes of prayer received by her congregation from the Bishop. Discussion ensued regarding the Rostered Minister's Retreat in January 2020.

**VOTED:  
SC.19.09.05**

**To appoint Mr. Kevin Pyle as Southern Ohio Synod Treasurer for a four-year term beginning September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2023. (Combs/Witt) APPROVED (Abstaining: Mr. Pyle).**

## Report of Auxiliaries

1. The Synod Council received written reports from the Women of the ELCA and Lutheran Men in Mission.

**The Reports of the Officers, Executive Committee, Women of the ELCA, and Lutheran Men in Mission, were then received by the Synod Council.**

### **EN BLOC**

#### **VOTED:**

**SC.19.09.06 To approve the En Bloc Recommendations. (Skamfer/Byrd)  
APPROVED.**

### **Rostered Ministers Status**

On Leave from Call

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- The Rev. Karen Asmus-Alsnauer, 1<sup>st</sup> yr (9/1/19)
- The Rev. Dr. Gerhard W. Kraus, 1st yr (8/15/19)
- Deacon Blaire Smith, 1st yr (6/6/19)

Retired Status

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- The Rev. Lynn Miller (1/1/20)
- The Rev. Stephen L. Nierman (11/1/19)
- The Rev. Dr. Mark Allan Powell (9/1/19)

Disability Status

**RECOMMENDATION:** N/A

Extension of Call

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- To extend a Synod Council call to The Rev. Gil Santiago, to serve as a full-time Interim Pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church, in Circleville OH, effective October 1, 2019.
- To extend a synod council call to Dr. Lynn Nakamura, to serve as Director of Candidacy and Leadership Development, effective September 1, 2019.

## Affirmation and Renewal of Appointment of Synod Authorized Ministers

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- To affirm the appointment of Synod Authorized Ministers; Mr. Jonathan Moyers to preside at St. Paul Lutheran Church, in Ironton, Ohio, effective July 2, 2019 thru January 25, 2020.

## Affirmation and Renewal of Synod Council Calls

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- To affirm Rev. Robert Abrams as Assistant to the Bishop.

### Information:

Contract affirmed with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Rev. Katie Kerrigan as Director for Evangelical Mission.

### Removal from the ELCA Roster

### **RECOMMENDATION: N/A**

## **Legal and Governance**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

- To appoint Mr. Kevin Pyle as Southern Ohio Synod Treasurer for a four-year term beginning September 1, 2019 thru August 25, 2023.
- To accept the resignations of Mr. Steve Fogle, Mrs. Mary Maguire and Mr. Matthew Petersen, from Synod Council.
- To approve the appointment of Ms. Mary Ellen Helms, of Prince of Peace, Loveland OH to serve a three-year term on the board of Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio, from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2023.
- To approve that the 2020 Synod assembly be held on May 16, 2020, at Epiphany Lutheran Church, in Centerville.
- To approve congregation constitutions for:
  - Gethsemane Lutheran Church, Columbus OH
  - New Lebanon Lutheran Church, Junction City OH

### Information:

TEEM Process Document (A14)

**Other Business:**       None.

Vice President Ellis then declared a recess at 2:15 PM.

Vice President Ellis reconvened the meeting at 2:20 PM.

**VOTED**

**SC.19.09.07           To move that Council go into Executive Session. (Pyle/Witt)  
APPROVED.**

Executive Session commenced at 2:23 PM.

**VOTED**

**SC 19.09.08           To move that Council report out of Executive Session. (Pyle/Witt)  
APPROVED.**

Vice President Ellis reconvened the general meeting at 2:52 PM.

**SC.19.09.09**

**VOTED**

**To authorize the Bishop to execute an exclusive right to sell contract  
with respect to the Synod office building real estate, and to authorize  
the Bishop and designated staff to continue to explore a new office  
building property. (Pyle/Schmidt) APPROVED.**

Vice President Ellis then declared a recess at 2:55 PM.

### **Installation Ceremony Followed by Eucharist**

Vice President Ellis reconvened the meeting at 3:20 PM.

Bishop Dillahunt then declared the meeting adjourned with the Service of Godspeed and Farewell.

The meeting was then adjourned at 3:25 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Holly R. Fischer  
Synod Council Secretary